

REMARKS

In the present Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the porous ceramic material has a hollow fibrous structure, and that the hollow fibrous structure comprises mesopores having a diameter of 2 to 50 nm on the surface of the hollow fibrous structure. Section 112 support for the amendment may be found, for example, in the second full paragraph at page 4 of the specification. No new matter has been added, and entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-18 will be pending, with claims 8-18 being withdrawn from consideration. Withdrawn claims 8-18 remain pending pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b).

In Paragraph No. 4 of the Action, claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Ying et al.

Applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn because Ying et al does not disclose or render obvious the porous ceramic material of the present invention.

As recited in independent claim 1, the present invention relates to a porous ceramic material. The porous ceramic material is produced by a process which includes the steps of:

(1) immersing a fibrous matrix in an aqueous solution containing a metal source, a surfactant and urea, and heating the aqueous solution so as to deposit a metallic compound on the outer surface of the fibrous matrix; and

(2) eliminating the fibrous matrix from the resulting fibrous matrix bearing the deposited metallic compound on the outer surface of the matrix.

As recited in claim 1, the porous ceramic material has a hollow fibrous structure, and the hollow fibrous structure has mesopores having a diameter of 2 to 50 nm on its surface.

Ying et al discloses an inorganic surface for immobilizing a catalytic metal atom wherein the inorganic surface is preferably hexagonally-packed or cubic-packed mesoporous metal oxide, such as silica and alumina, having a pore size of about 10 to about 200 Å, i.e., 1 to 20 nm. See Ying et al at col. 5, lines 35-36; and col. 5, line 63 to col. 6, line 3. Ying et al further discloses that the pores are preferably tubular (col. 6, line 52).

In contrast, the present claims recite that the porous ceramic material of the invention has a hollow fibrous structure. Ying et al does not disclose or suggest the porous ceramic material of the present invention, let alone one made by the presently recited process.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-7 based on Ying et al is respectfully requested.

In Paragraph No. 6 of the Action, claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over McGrath et al.

Applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn because McGrath et al does not disclose or render obvious the porous ceramic material of the present invention.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
U.S. Appln. No.: 10/801,639

McGrath et al discloses a mesoporous ceramic material conforming to a lyotropic liquid crystalline L3 phase and having a pore size diameter of about 10-100 nm (Abstract; col. 6, lines 30-33). McGrath et al further describes that the ceramic structure has a hexagonal phase of formed tubules (col. 6, lines 54-55).

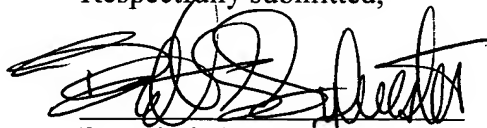
However, McGrath et al, like Ying et al, does not disclose or render obvious the porous ceramic material of the present invention having a hollow fibrous structure, let alone such a material made by the presently recited process.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5 and 7 based on McGrath et al are respectfully requested.

Allowance is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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